

BEWARE OF THE MOVIE RATING SYSTEM

November 26, 2009 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)

“Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing” (Deuteronomy 7:26).

In the United States and many other countries movies and television programs are rated by content, and many Christian parents use the rating system, but it is an unwise and unspiritual standard.

In America, the movies are rated by the Motion Picture Association of America as follows:

G- General Audiences

PG- Parental Guidance Suggested

PG-13- Parents Strongly Cautioned

R- Restricted - No children under 17

NC-17 - No one 17 or Under Admitted

The television ratings are similar, as follows:

TV-Y - Directed at young children; appropriate for all children

TV-Y7 - Directed to children 7 and older

TV-Y7-FV - Directed to children 7 and older with more violent content; e.g. Power Rangers

TV-G - General audiences; deemed appropriate for all ages.

TV-PG - Parental guidance suggested (may have “suggestive dialogue, mild coarse language, sexual situations, moderate violence”)

TV-14 - Recommended for people 14 or older (may have “highly suggestive dialogue, strong coarse language, intense sexual situations, intense violence”)

TV-MA - intended for mature audiences

The problem with the ratings is that they are invented by men and women who are not measuring the programming by God’s Word. Instead, they are applying humanistic standards.

When measured by God’s Word, even most **G-rated** movies and television programs are not wholesome. They flaunt immodest and unisex fashions that influence children. Child actors are often depicted in a favorable light while being disrespectful to parents and elders. It is supposed to be “cute” and entertaining, but this type of thing influences children and has degraded society.

Beyond this, a great many G-rated and children's programs promote occultism, New Age, weird and godless fantasy, evolution, narcissism, mockery of holy things, and pushing the envelope of childhood innocence.

Disney is one of the worst offenders. The author of the book entitled "The Gospel According to Disney" observed that Walt Disney preached a religious message through his cartoon characters, a message that "faith is an essential element--faith in yourself and, even more, faith in something greater than yourself, even if it is some vague, nonsectarian higher power" (Mark Pinsky, "Finding faith in the house of the mouse," *The Washington Post*, Aug. 14, 2004, p. B7).

Disney's animated classics are filled with pagan images and things strongly denounced by the Scriptures, such as witches and demons, sorcerers and spells, genies and goblins. Like *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings*, the Disney cartoons present the damnable concept that there is good and bad magic. Disney often depicts witches and sorcerers as likeable heroes.

The 1940 animated movie *Pinocchio* depicted a man who brings a puppet to life by wishing upon a star; the puppet is subsequently visited by a Blue Fairy who advises, "Let your conscience be your guide." The Disney fairy also preaches a works gospel that "the gift of life" is attained by "choosing right from wrong." The fairy is cute and likeable, but a false gospel is cursed of God (Galatians 1:6-9). The Bible warns that the Devil appears as an angel of light in order to deceive people (2 Cor. 12).

Disney did not attend church and though there are churches on practically every main street in America, there are no churches on Main Street in Disneyland in California or Disney World in Florida. Yet Christian parents have allowed Disney's cartoons and movies to influence their children. Pinsky notes that "few entertainment productions continue to have as profound an impact on young children as [Disney's] animated features" and "millions of children around the world know from Disney much of what they do about the practical application of right and wrong."

Some years back the Southern Baptist Convention called for a boycott of Disney, but that boycott was based on newer, more morally edgy Disney productions and ignored the false New Age gospel preached through Disney's earlier movies, movies that are found in most Southern Baptist homes in the land!

When Disneyland opened in 1954, *Time* magazine featured Walt Disney on its cover and called him "the poet of the new American humanism."

Even many of the old Western movies are indecent when weighed by biblical standards. The women typically wear tight, revealing clothing. The likeable heroes drink and gamble and are irreligious. Immoral bargirls are portrayed as innocent, good-hearted people, the salt of the earth, while church-going Christians are depicted as weak hypocrites and fools.

One pastor told me that he has had the custom, from time to time, of asking his sons if they find anything offensive in the home. One year he took one of his sons fishing and asked that question, and the son immediately brought up a certain John Wayne movie that had put improper images in his mind.

The Andy Griffith Show is one of the most wholesome shows that has ever been produced for television, at least the early black and white programs. It teaches moral lessons and presents wholesome marriage relationships. But consider the worldview. One reader who responded to our survey wrote,

“Not too long ago I realized that even the so called moral programming I watched as a child (such as *Little House on the Prairie*, *Andy Griffin*, etc.) portrayed a good life without salvation. Never once did I ever hear the Gospel and it was assumed that everyone went to Heaven.”

We must not forget that moralism is not the gospel of Jesus Christ, that people don't go to heaven because they are “good.” Even “Otis,” the town drunk, was depicted as a really nice guy who would doubtless go to heaven if such a place existed. Andy certainly never quoted 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 that says drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

I am not saying that it is wrong to watch some Andy Griffith shows with the family, but if we do, we must carefully educate the children about the error that is taught by the program's worldview. Parents need to discuss such things openly and effectively and not allow the entertainment fare to do the educating. They must train the children how to analyze such things biblically so as not to be deceived by the wiles of the devil.

And we should make certain that our children do not become Andy Griffith/Ole Yeller experts, that they spend more time hearing God's Word than immersed even in “innocent” entertainment. They should know more about the Bible and truly profitable things in life than they do about some shallow Hollywood program.

Consider another “innocent” G-rated program, *The Cosby Show*. Unlike most other television series today, *Cosby* depicted an intact family, with a man and a woman living together that were actually married! But the fashions and attitudes and philosophy are not wholesome from a biblical perspective. A love for rock music is one of the show's themes. One of the *Cosby* programs dealt with the subject of whether one of the teenage daughters should have pre-marital sex, and the advice was merely to wait until she was “ready” and “in love.” These programs have a powerful effect on young people because the actors are so likeable and believable. Because they are so much more decent than the average television fare, they seem wholesome by comparison, and parents let down their guards.

When it comes to **the PG rating**, even the secular reviewers deem “parental guidance” to be necessary with these particular programs and movies, which should be a loud warning to God's people.

Consider “Monk,” one of the more wholesome prime time shows these days. This PG-rated program features the exploits of a psychologically damaged police detective. Though it is less offensive than most TV offerings, “Monk” is far from innocent. The women are dressed very provocatively and the program is literally filled with exclamations of “Oh My God” and other profanities. The philosophy is anti-biblical and anti-Christ. It promotes the popular myths of humanistic psychology, operates in a culture largely devoid of thoughts about God and eternity, and when God is mentioned it is either to profane His name, to debunk the miraculous, to mock religion, or to promote Catholicism.

This is about the best that Hollywood has to offer today, and it is typical PG fare.

The situation comedies are almost universally designed to brainwash the audience. As Ken Matto observes in his report entitled “The Dangers of Television”:

“Television programs are designed with the purpose of reprogramming your mind by breaking down your defenses so you will accept a lie as truth. Many of the anti-Christian and immoral precepts are bellowed forth in situation comedies. They get you to laugh, then they put forth their principles and you have accepted their teachings without reservation. This is why much reprogramming is done through comedy.”

As for **PG-13**, even non-Christians recognize that great moral dangers lurk there and that the line between PG-13 and R is non-existent.

USA Today published an article entitled “PG-13 can lull folks with false security.” It is a warning about the filthiness of PG-13 movies by a humanistic secular newspaper! The article contains the following important statement:

“PG-13 was designed, I believe, to apply the friendly PG symbol to movies that have no business even being considered for viewing by most young teenagers and preteens. The age of assignment for the rating is deceptive, and it lulls parents into a false sense of security” (Joe Zanger, editor of PG-14, *USA Today*, Nov. 22, 1999, p. 2D).

This is an important warning. The article also states that there is often no difference between PG-13 and R-rated movies, and even when there is a difference, it is only minor. Both types of movies routinely contain nudity, immorality, gratuitous and graphic violence, and foul language. From the standpoint of a Christian who wants to obey the Lord’s call to holiness, there is no real difference. Immodesty is immodesty. Cursing is cursing. Blasphemy is blasphemy. Extramarital sex is extramarital sex. If one movie contains a little less of these things than another, that does not make either movie acceptable before God.

The ratings have become more lenient with the passing of time. Movies that would have been rated R a few years ago are routinely rated PG-13 today. Further, the category of NC-17 (meaning no one under 17 may be admitted) has been added to replace the old filthy X rating. There is a Satanic agenda to put increasingly more godless content into increasingly more widely distributed movies.

Also noted in the *USA Today* article is the fact that many directors and producers actually want their movies to be rated PG-13 today, as opposed to an R rating or a PG rating. This is because young people are admitted to the PG-13 movies as opposed to the R or restricted movies and they consider them more desirable and grownup than PG movies. PG-13 movies are raking in huge receipts at the box office. Of the top 21 films that have grossed more than \$200 million, 13 are PG-13, while only three are PG, two are G, and three are R.

If secular people can see the danger of PG-13 movies, why can't God's people! We must understand that the Hollywood-New York entertainment business is not now and never has been the friend of God and righteousness. From their inception, motion pictures and television have pushed the boundaries of morality in society increasingly farther from the standard of God's Word. Yet more members of Bible-believing churches watch unwholesome television and movies today than ever, and there is less plain preaching on this matter today than ever.

We must remember that the movie and television ratings systems were not devised by godly people who are committed to obeying the Bible, but by secular people who are controlled by the philosophy of this world. In reality, ungodly movies are not wholesome fare for children, young people, OR for adults. PG-13 things such as nudity and foul language are not acceptable before God for adults any more than for young people.

Like the frog in the gradually-heating pot, God's people who are careless about separating from Hollywood's filthy fare become desensitized by it.

The following are typical quotations from reviews of PG-13 movies by professional secular critics:

A CHEF IN LOVE -- PG-13 "violence, rape, sex, nudity, profanity -- it's pretty raunchy"

MEN IN BLACK -- PG-13 "violence, profanity, gore, vulgarity"

ANACONDA -- PG-13 "violence, gore, profanity, vulgarity, sex, nudity"

BIRD ON A WIRE -- PG-13 "considerable mayhem, as well as sex, profanity and some nudity"

BLAME IT ON THE BELLBOY -- PG-13 "sadistic, graphic violence, as well as sex, profanity, vulgarity and some partial nudity"

CLUELESS -- PG-13 "violence, vulgarity, profanity and drugs ... the film's cavalier suggestions that casual sex is perfectly acceptable for 15-year-olds and that smoking marijuana is fine as long as it's at a party are extremely irresponsible."

PARENTHOOD -- PG-13 sex, "profanity, vulgarity, raunchy ... Some of the material is so adult that an R rating doesn't seem unreasonable"

RESCUE ME -- "is rated PG-13 but has an awful lot of R-rated material, including violence, profanity, sex and nudity"

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